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# Trump eggs on protesters as Iran presses charges

• US president says Iranians 'will have to figure it out' themselves, cancels all engagement with Tehran

• Oil prices rise after Trump slaps 25pc tariffs on states doing business with Iran

• Iranian official puts death toll from unrest at 2,000

• World leaders react to tariff imposition, 'horrific deaths'

WASHINGTON/DUBAI/DOHA: Iranian authorities will press charges punishable by death against some individuals arrested during recent demonstrations, prosecutors said on Tuesday, even as US President Donald Trump urged Iranians to keep protesting, saying help was on the way.

"Iranian Patriots, KEEP PROTESTING - TAKE OVER YOUR INSTITUTIONS!!!... HELP IS ON ITS WAY," Trump said in a post on Truth Social, adding he had cancelled all meetings with Iranian officials until the "senseless killing" of protesters stopped.

But when asked to expand on his message to protesting Iranians, he said: "You're going to have to figure that one out. I'm sorry."

**Spiralling crisis: Editorial on Page 6**

**Iran's regime hasn't reached 'moment of fall', says Vali Nasr: Page 11**

Following the US president's post, Iranian security chief Ali Larijani said on social media platform X that Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were the "main killers" of the Iranian people.

The message came hours after Trump slapped 25pc import tariffs on products from any country doing business with Iran — a major oil exporter.

The move triggered movement in global markets, with oil prices surging by about 3pc on Tuesday as the prospect of disruptions to Iranian crude exports overshadowed possible increased supply from Venezuela.

While foreign monitors continued to speculate on the number of casualties from the crackdown on recent anti-government protests, *Reuters* quoted an Iranian official as saying that around 2,000 people had been killed.

The official blamed "terrorists" for the deaths of both protesters and security personnel, but did not give a breakdown.

Iran's authorities have tried to take a dual approach to the demonstrations, calling protests over economic problems legitimate while enforcing a harsh security crackdown.

The office of the Tehran prosecutor said in a statement quoted by state television that an unspecified number would be charged with "waging war against God".

"The government sees security forces and protesters as its children. To the best of our abilities, we have tried and will try to listen to their voices even if some have tried to hijack such protests," government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Tuesday.

Communications restrictions including

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MILAN: Anti-Iran regime protesters chant slogans during a rally outside the US consulate.—AFP

# 'Limited options' for Pakistan to circumvent US punitive tariff on Iran

• Officials remain mum, acknowledge risk of 'premature positioning' • China rejects 25pc tariff on trade with Iran as Gulf states weigh options

By Baqir Sajjad Syed in Islamabad

ANALYSIS

AFTER US President Donald Trump announced a 25 per cent tariff for any country doing business with Iran, Pakistan has limited options available, but none of them are without consequences.

The announcement from President Trump came at a time when protests were raging in the Islamic Republic amid a severe crackdown, resulting in the death of at least 500 people, as per a rights monitor.

The statement marked a sharp escalation in Washington's long-running campaign of economic pressure against Iran.

Issued via social media and declared "effective immediately", the statement by President Trump seeks to recast tariffs not as a trade remedy but as an instrument of foreign policy enforcement, with global reach and few visible limits.

The language of the post is categorical. Any country that maintains commercial ties with Iran, regardless of scale or sector, would see its exports to the US penalised.

This is not a sanction in the conventional sense. Iran is already subject to extensive American restrictions. Instead, it is a secondary measure aimed squarely at third countries, forcing them to weigh their economic engagement with Tehran against continued access to the US market.

**Another 200 students, pilgrims return from Iran: Page 5**

Pakistan is also in a bind due to the latest Trump move. Its bilateral trade with Iran, estimated at around $3 billion annually, has grown steadily and is often conducted through barter or local currency arrangements, reflecting both sanctions constraints and Pakistan's own dollar shortages. At the same time, the US remains a major export destination and a key player in Pakistan's external ties.

A 25pc tariff layered onto existing US duties would directly affect Pakistan's key exports, particularly at a time of economic fragility, while a sharp reduction in trade with Iran would have implications for energy supply, border economies and regional connectivity. Pakistan

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# UAE accord in the works to address Pakistanis' visa woes

• Immigration checks to be completed in Pakistan before departure • Travellers to bypass routine immigration on arrival in UAE • Karachi chosen for pilot phase; system to be expanded later to other cities • NA resolution demands probe into offloading of documented passengers

Dawn Report

KARACHI: Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday agreed to pursue a formal agreement on "pre-immigration clearance" for Pakistani nationals travelling to the Gulf country, the Ministry of Interior said.

Under the proposed arrangement, immigration formalities would be completed in Pakistan before departure, allowing passengers to avoid routine immigration processing on arrival in the UAE.

The decision was taken during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and a UAE delegation led by Director General of Customs and Port Security Ahmed bin Lahij Al Falasi, according to a statement.

"The immigration process for passengers will be completed in Pakistan before travel," Mr Naqvi was quoted as saying, adding that travellers would be able to exit UAE airports "like domestic passengers" once the system is in place.

The ministry said the initiative would be launched as a pilot project, with the first phase to begin in Karachi. Mr Naqvi voiced optimism that the new system will "facilitate travel and improve the overall travel experience". However, he did not mention any date for the commencement of the pilot project.

The UAE delegation expressed support for the initiative and agreed to coordinate with Pakistani authorities on the administrative and technical arrangements. The system would be expanded to other cities after the pilot phase in Karachi, it added.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and Interior Secretary Khurram Agha were also present at the meeting.

**Visa restrictions**

The announcement comes as Pakistanis have faced difficulties obtaining UAE visas over the past year.

In November 2025, Additional Interior Secretary Salman Chaudhry told a Senate functional committee that the UAE was not issuing visas to Pakistanis. He had also said Saudi Arabia and the UAE had "stopped short of imposing a ban on the Pakistani passport".

In early July last year, reports of visa rejections prompted Mr Naqvi to take up the matter with his UAE counterpart. In a meeting that month, UAE Interior Minister Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan assured Mr Naqvi of

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# PTI sit-in near Adiala 'dispersed' after police action

Aleema, other sisters staged protest outside jail after being barred from meeting Imran

Dawn Report

RAWALPINDI: Police dispersed a sit-in staged by the PTI founder Imran Khan's party supporters and his sisters at Factory Naka near Adiala jail after the authorities did not allow them to meet the incarcerated former prime minister.

However, Mr Khan's sisters Aleema, Uzma, and Noreen Niazi were still present at Factory Naka with a handful of supporters after midnight.

The earlier police action forced many participants to flee towards the Gorakhpur neighbourhood near the Adiala prison, with the anti-riot unit in pursuit, authorities said.

Routes to the Adiala jail remained blocked on Tuesday to stop PTI supporters from reaching the prison, and a large police contingent was deployed at the protest site. The sisters had arrived to meet Imran Khan, but they were stopped at Factory Naka and barred from going towards the prison along with other party leaders, including Salman Akram Raja and Barrister Gohar Ali Khan.

Barrister Gohar was stopped at Dahgal Naka, while PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said he was stopped at a police checkpoint near Bahria Town and later at Chakri before reaching Adiala jail.

Earlier in the day, Aleema told journalists that "we will do whatever needs to be done" for the release of the PTI leader. She also called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi "the future of Pakistan", adding that the "youth in Pakistan have buried old politics". "This is new politics," she said. About the PTI founder's messages from jail, she said "whatever messages he sends" were posted on X. Imran Khan does not have access to the internet in jail, and it remains unclear who operates his X account.

For the past several weeks, police have been breaking up these sit-ins in midnight operations using force, including water cannons. However, PTI leaders have insisted it is their court-mandated right to meet Mr Khan and that they will continue staging protests until the meeting is allowed.

**Governor asks CM to stop advocating Afghanistan's case: Page 8**

It may be noted that an order issued by the Islamabad High Court in March 2025 mandated that meetings with Imran Khan be permitted twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday. Despite the IHC's order, PTI leaders and his family members have been stopped from meeting Mr Khan.

*Mohammad Asghar in Rawalpindi and Tahir Naseer contributed to this report*

# Move to defuse arbitration risk tied to $250m funding

• ECC forms high-powered panel to seek settlement with APL • Okays Rs24bn in supplementary grants for various ministries

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Faced with the prospect of international arbitration involving three foreign investors, including one linked to US President Donald Trump, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on Tuesday constituted a high-powered committee to find an amicable settlement, amid concerns over a potential $250 million immediate investment and overall foreign investor confidence.

The ECC meeting, chaired by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, also approved about eight supplementary grants totalling around Rs24 billion for various ministries.

The dispute centres on Asia Petroleum Limited (APL), which owns an 82-kilometre furnace oil pipeline from Port Qasim to the Hubco power plant. APL is owned by Pakistan State Oil (49 per cent) and three foreign firms (51pc): US-based VECO International Ltd (12.5pc), Singapore-based Infraavast Ltd (26pc) and Kuwait's Indepndent Petroleum Group (12.5pc). Infraavast also holds a 45pc stake in Fauji Oil Terminal and Distribution Company (FOTCO).

Sources said APL Chairman Peter Leathard, who is associated to President Trump, has met cabinet members and other stakeholders, including Mr Aurangzeb, to protest what he termed a unilateral stoppage of payments for more than 15 months and to convey reluctance to go ahead with a proposed $250m mid-point oil port project at Hub and have threatened to pursue international arbitration, seeking costs and penalties.

Interestingly, the APL's pipeline tariff and implementation agreement, which came into force in 1996, is set to expire by February 2027 in any case. The payments, both in case of termination of the agreement now or completion of the term, have been claimed at $32m, of which about $15.7m has to come back to PSO, being the largest shareholder.

After adjustments for taxes, net payables to three foreign investors come to about $13m over the next 13 months, even in the case of a normal payment schedule based on sovereign guarantees for the pipeline. The APL also had the right of way along the pipeline for the then visualised Saudi-Aramco refinery, which has not materialised so far.

A cabinet member, while talking to *Dawn,* did not agree that an agreement with foreign investors had been mishandled unnecessarily, but conceded that the dispute had emanated from poor judgement and oversight in the heat of negotiations with independent power producers (IPPs) and could have been avoided. "Twenty-nine years had already passed, the contract and the pipeline had worked well and one year with a nominal cost should not have become an issue," he said.

The issue surfaced after the National Task Force on the power sector terminated contracts with five IPPs in October last year, including the Hubco plant, which had received furnace oil via the APL pipeline under the 1996 agreement backed by sovereign guarantees. The pipeline was originally designed to serve two IPPs, but only Hubco materialised, leaving it redundant from a contractual standpoint after the termination.

The task force, spearheaded by Zafar Iqbal, considered the APL pipeline's utility at the time of termination of power purchase agreements and was told that it was a strategic project that could be dedicated to the planned Aramco refinery, along with additional infrastructure. A supply agreement with nearby Cnergyico Petroleum Limited (formerly Byco) was also proposed and APL was offered to come up with a project that could be joined by Pak-Arab Refinery and others.

However, Mr Iqbal ordered payments to APL to be stopped, prompting strong objections from the three foreign shareholders, who cited the continuing force of the agreement and sovereign guarantees. In resentment letters, they threatened not to go

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# PTI formally proposes Achakzai as opposition leader in NA

By Iftikhar A. Khan and Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The opposition PTI on Tuesday formally requested the appointment of Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai as leader of the opposition in the National Assembly (NA).

This is the second time that the party has formally proposed his name for the opposition leader's post in the lower house of Parliament.

The written request was submitted a day after NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq began afresh the process to fill the position of the opposition leader. The slot has been lying vacant for almost five months since the disqualification of PTI's Omar Ayub.

Addressing the NA speaker, the letter written by PTI's chief whip in NA Malik Aamir Dogar for the nomination stated: "We, the undersigned members of the National Assembly belonging to the opposition benches, have the honour to nominate Mehmood Khan Achakzai MNA (NA-266) for appointment as the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly of Pakistan."

In addition, a PTI delegation met the NA speaker, who said that signatures will be verified by Wednesday (today).

The letter referred to rule 39 of the Rules of Procedures of Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007, saying that the "leader of the opposition is to be appointed from among the members of the house who

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## ON OTHER PAGES

### WWF disputes govt claim on tree removal

WWF-Pakistan disputed authorities' stance that paper mulberry trees were removed in Islamabad for causing allergies, stating that the action was also linked to infrastructure development. Recently, large-scale tree removal took place in at least three locations in the capital. Minister of State for Interior Tallal Chaudhry said 29,115 trees had been removed, while '40,000 trees planted'. **Page 4**

### B'desh tells ICC it won't play in India

Bangladesh's cricket board said on Tuesday it had repeated its refusal to travel to India for next month's T20 World Cup during talks with the ICC. Bangladesh announced on Jan 4 that it would not play its T20 World Cup matches in India after its player Mustafizur Rahman was released by his Indian Premier League team amid growing tensions between the two countries. **Page 18**